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ABSTRACT

Following two years of pilot projects, the Beginning Teacher Induction Program (BTIP) was implemented in all twelve anglephone school districts in New Brunswick (Canada) during the 1995-96 school year. The program is sponsored by the Province Department of Education with the support of the New Brunswick Teachers Association and the University of New Brunswick. Participants were 156 beginning teachers and 147 mentors. This study is based on data from questionnaires sent to mentors, beginning teachers, principals, and district contact staff with 203 replies (49 percent return) analyzed. Beginning teachers and mentors reported frequent informal contacts and class observation and feedback by mentors. Beginning teachers emphasized the importance of mentors for emotional and professional support and insights. Mentors reported gains in knowledge of new techniques and the opportunity to reflect on their own teaching practices. Principals and district staff reported similar benefits and all groups recommended continuation of the program. Problems were reported in regard to a shortage of time, lack of information, failure to develop a collegial relationship, pairs mismatched in grade levels, and classrooms not in close proximity. Overall, it was found that the goals of the program were met and the program holds considerable promise for both teacher induction and encouraging collegial norms of professional development within the teaching profession. (JLS)

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A Report on the 1995-96 Beginning Teacher Induction Program in New Brunswick

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following two years of pilot projects, the Beginning Teacher Induction Program (BTIP) was implemented in all twelve anglophone school districts in New Brunswick during the 1995-96 school year. The program is sponsored by the Department of Education with the support of the New Brunswick Teachers Association and the University of New Brunswick. A mentor training workshop was held in August for approximately forty-five mentors and district contact people or coordinators. Eventually one hundred fifty-six beginning teachers and one hundred forty-seven mentors participated in the program. The Department of Education allocated $500 for each beginning teacher-mentor pair to be used for supply teachers and professional resources. The NBTA supplemented this figure by $300 per pair.

This study is based on data derived from questionnaires which were sent to all mentors, beginning teachers, principals, and district contact people involved in the BTIP. Altogether, 203 replies were analyzed for a 49% return on the survey.

Selection and Training. Principals played a key role in the selection of mentors, although in many cases they referred to colleagues for advice. The relatively late announcement of the BTIP in the school year combined with late appointments of new staff may explain the limited number of participants in the August mentor training workshop. Only one-quarter of the mentors and three-quarters of the district contact people attended this workshop. Those who did attend felt it clarified their role expectations and developed useful mentoring skills. After school began, about half of the districts provided some form of training for their mentors and beginning teachers. It was evident from the data that the quality of this inservice varied considerably from district to district. Furthermore, mentoring pairs from different districts reported great discrepancies in the amount of support from local personnel and information about the BTIP which they received during the year.

Activities. Beginning teachers and their mentors reported they made frequent, often daily, informal contacts. Often these served simply to provide emotional support to the new teacher. At other times they used spare periods, after-school time, or blocks of time made possible by using funds for supply teachers, so they could discuss specific educational issues or share resources. These kinds of emotionally-safe activities occurred frequently and were highly valued by both the beginning teachers and their partners.

Slightly over half of the beginning teachers reported that their mentors observed them teach and provided feedback on at least one occasion. The same proportion indicated they had observed their mentor and other colleagues teaching. The data implied that such opportunities occurred infrequently, but were highly valued by the beginning teachers. In fact, this was their top choice for activities they would like to have engaged in more often.

It appeared that six of the twelve districts arranged for district professional development activities for mentors and/or beginning teachers. Comments from the participants indicated that these were

generally useful for clarifying the expectations of the BTIP and providing opportunities for sharing ideas. In districts where no such meeting were held, BTIP participants often complained that they lacked information and wanted opportunities to meet as a group. Even when such opportunities were lacking, the beginning teachers unanimously endorsed the value of the activities they and their mentors engaged in.

Benefits of the BTIP. The beginning teachers' comments strongly emphasized how much they appreciated knowing that there was an experienced teacher looking out for them on a daily basis. This provided an important emotional support which helped insure the success of their first year in teaching. In addition to the emotional support, they reported gaining valuable professional insights from both mentors and other colleagues. Not every situation was ideal, but 92% of the beginning teachers judged the overall program as beneficial to them; 98% recommended its continuation.

The mentors also strongly endorsed (92%) the continuation of the BTIP. They reported both cognitive and affective benefits from their involvement. Professionally, they felt they had gained new teaching ideas. In addition, having to reflect on their own teaching practices had led to new insights. Emotionally, most mentors really enjoyed their relationship with their younger, enthusiastic partners; they also appreciated the professional recognition accorded them for their participation.

Principals and district contact people described similar benefits which they perceived the BTIP had for beginning teachers and mentors. In addition, they suggested there had been less significant, indirect benefits for non-participating faculty and students. Most principals said they appreciated the program and saw great potential in it. Three-quarters of the principals rated their school program successful; 100% of those who replied, recommended the continuation of the provincial program.

Problems Encountered in the BTIP. Although the benefits far outnumbered the problems encountered, BTIP participants identified a significant number of conditions which caused difficulties. Every group complained about a shortage of time to commit to the program. After the time problem, the biggest complaint of the mentors and beginning teachers was unclear guidelines for BTIP activities and funding. This was especially true in districts which did not provide inservice training for participants. The late start of the program in some districts, pairing mentors and beginning teachers who had different teaching or grade level assignments, and the lack of proximity of mentors' and beginning teachers' classrooms, were also identified as conditions which caused significant problems.

Most negative experiences which were described could be attributed to three reasons: mentors and/or district contact people did not attend the provincial training sessions, district representatives did not provide information and support at the district level, or a collegial relationship between the mentor and the beginning teacher did not develop. Examples of personal incompatibility were relatively rare, but sometimes indifference by one of the partners or an

itinerant schedule scuttled their relationship. Overall, beginning teachers gave their mentors high ratings for their interpersonal skills, professional expertise, accessibility, and sensitivity.

Conclusions. Based on the results of this survey, the investigator concluded that in spite of the fact that the BTIP was hastily implemented and professional training was not provided for all mentors, the goals of the program were generally achieved. Furthermore, it appears that the induction program as envisioned by the Provincial Steering Committee is basically sound. Details of the program need to be communicated more effectively and implemented with more fidelity in all districts. If one considers that this was the first year of a very ambitious program, the degree to which the BTIP achieved its goals is quite remarkable. The BTIP appears to hold considerable promise not only for the successful induction of new teachers but also for encouraging collegial norms of professional development within the teaching profession.

Recommendations. It is hoped that the following recommendations will provide useful insights and direction to policy-makers, administrators, and future participants in the Beginning Teacher Induction Program:

1. The Department of Education should continue to support the BTIP in districts which agree to follow the basic guidelines outlined by the Provincial Steering Committee.

2. The Provincial Steering Committee should develop a BTIP information brochure and distribute it to all interested parties. This brochure should articulate the goals and benefits of the program, list considerations for mentor selection, explain the funding arrangements, and provide suggestions for appropriate activities for mentors and beginning teachers. If this project was found to be too ambitious for one brochure, then consideration should be given to producing one brochure for administrators and another for participants.

3. The Department of Education should continue to appoint an individual to serve as the provincial coordinator and to insist that district directors of educations select committed individuals to serve as district representatives to coordinate and facilitate the program at the district level.

4. The Department of Education should continue to offer provincial mentor training workshops for new mentors and district representatives as early as practical in the school year.

5. The current level of funding seems adequate. However, consideration should be given to providing BTIP funding only to districts which clearly identify mentor-beginning teacher pairs, provide trained leadership, indicate their intention to provide support for participants at the district level, and initiate their program in the Fall.

6. Establish a homepage or similar electronic bulletin board arrangement for BTIP participants and facilitators so they can easily share information and communicate with one another using the internet.

7. Experienced teachers who have an interest in teacher induction should be selected to act as mentors. Administrators should be avoided, if possible.

A Report on the 1995-96
Beginning Teacher Induction Program
in New Brunswick

The purpose of this document is to report on data collected in a survey of participants in the Beginning Teacher Induction Program (BTIP) conducted in all anglophone school districts in New Brunswick during the 1995-96 school year. In addition, the report contains recommendations for further refinement of the program.

Background to the BTIP

The Beginning Teacher Induction Program was created because provincial education officials anticipated an influx of beginning teachers into the New Brunswick school system . A Steering Committee consisting of representatives from the Department of Education, the NB Teachers' Association, and the University of New Brunswick, was established to determine how best to prepare for this development. The Committee decided to implement a pilot project in two districts in which beginning teachers were being hired and in which there was enthusiastic support from the superintendents. The project began during the 1993-94 school year when sixteen beginning teachers were paired with sixteen mentor teachers in ten schools in School Districts 12 (Woodstock) and 17 (Oromocto). Funding was provided by the NB Department of Education. Details of this pilot project are contained in a report entitled "Final Report on the 1993-94 Beginning Teacher Induction Pilot Program". This report is available from the Department of Education in Fredericton.

The following year the pilot program continued in these same two districts, however, there were fewer beginning teachers available to involve in the program. Hence the focus shifted from the needs of beginning teachers to the needs of mentors.

During the two-year period from 1993-95, the Steering Committee, with representation from the pilot districts, continued to monitor the progress of the pilot projects and to gather and field test various teacher induction resources. A review of the literature on teacher induction, combined with the on-going experiences of the Committee, helped create a vision of what a "made-in-New Brunswick" teacher induction program might look like. When in the spring of 1995 it became apparent that there would be a significant number of beginning teachers entering the system, the Committee made a hasty decision to offer an induction program to all anglophone school districts in the province. District officials were notified of the program in June; they were asked to send mentors and district representatives to a two-day workshop which was held in Fredericton the week before schools opened in August. In total, approximately forty-five mentors and district representatives attended.

Each of the twelve anglophone districts eventually participated to varying degrees in the program. Not all of them were represented at the August workshop, and many of the teachers who eventually acted as mentors did not attend the training workshop in Fredericton. District Contact Persons (generally district supervisors) were named to coordinate the program in each district. An

individual, Cathy Thorburn, was seconded from the public school system to coordinate the BTIP provincially from the offices of the Department of Education.

At the beginning of the program, the Department of Education advised each district that they would provide $500 in funding to support the professional needs of each beginning teacher/mentor pair. In late October, the NBTA announced that it would provide an additional $300 to pairs who applied for it. This document attempts to provide details of what happened during this program and how the money was spent.

An Introduction to the Study

Separate questionnaires were developed to gather data from the beginning teachers (BT), the mentors (M), the principals (P) of schools with BT/M pairs, and the district contact persons (DCP). These questionnaires were sent to participants at the beginning of May 1996; replies were received from all twelve district contact people, from fifty-two principals, from sixty-three mentors, and from seventy-six beginning teachers. Because District 2 in the Moncton area was granted permission to use the BTIP funds to support an on-going professional development project which involved beginning teachers, not all beginning teachers in that district were assigned a mentor. Hence, numbers of beginning teachers and mentors do not match. Altogether, approximately one hundred fifty-six beginning teachers, one hundred forty-seven mentors, ninety-six principals, and twelve district contact persons were involved in the 1995-96 program. Percentage returns for the questionnaires in each category were as follows:

Beginning teachers	- 49%
Mentors	- 43%
Principals	- 54%
District Contact Persons	- 100%

Table 1, which follows, shows the number of questionnaire returns from the participating school districts in each of the participant categories. While the number of returns is accurate, estimates were used for the number of participants in Districts 2 (Moncton) and 8 (Saint John).

It is noteworthy that there were no returns from principals in District 2, despite the involvement of teachers and mentors in 19 schools. While this may be quite appropriate because of the special nature of that district's involvement, it significantly lowers the percentage of returns in that category. If that district's principals are not counted, the percentage climbs to 69% from 54%.

Table 1

The number of questionnaires returned out of the total distributed to beginning teachers, mentors, principals, and district contact people in anglophone school districts of New Brunswick.

Districts	BT	Mentor	Principal	DCP
2	19/40	9/20	0/19	1/1
4	10/14	10/14	6/8	1/1
6	1/1	0/1	0/1	1/1
8	14/20	13/20	18/18	1/1
10	4/5	2/5	3/4	1/1
12	2/7	3/5	2/5	1/1
13	1/5	2/5	3/3	1/1
14	2/3	1/3	0/3	1/1
15	4/7	6/7	2/5	1/1
16	0/4	1/4	1/3	1/1
17	8/15	6/15	8/9	1/1
18	11/35	10/35	9/18	1/1
Total	76/156	63/147	52/96	12/12

The Mentors

Questionnaires were received from sixty-three mentor teachers in eleven of the twelve participating school districts. The missing district was a district where there was only one beginning teacher. Most of the mentors (74%) were female; twenty-five of them (40%) taught at the elementary level. Within this group approximately one-third were kindergarten teachers. Twenty-three mentors (38%) taught at the middle/junior high level, and the remaining fourteen mentors (22%) taught at the senior high level.

All of the mentors were 27 years of age or older, with 62% falling into the 27-45 age category. Their

total years of teaching experience ranged from four to thirty-five years. The mean years of teaching experience for the group was 17.1 years; the median was 18 years. The mode, however, turned out to be 5 years, with five teachers in that category.

As you would expect, the mentors taught a full range of grades and subjects. It appeared, however, that a significant proportion of them were involved in teaching either French Core or French Immersion. As previously mentioned, another conspicuous sub-category consisted of kindergarten teachers. This appears to indicate higher levels of hiring in these two areas of the teaching profession.

Selection and Training

The vast majority of the mentors reported that they were asked by their principal if they would act as a mentor for a beginning teacher. A few were approached by a vice-principal, department head, or district contact person. Two mentors indicated that they were actually asked to serve by the beginning teacher. One mentor wrote, "[I] approached the BT on my own as I was involved in the growth plan model as a facilitator with District 2". Another mentor implied having felt surprised at learning she was a mentor: "I did not know I was a mentor until December, 1995 and have had no info in regards to the program".

The Steering Committee hoped that a high percentage of the mentors would attend the two days of mentor inservice held in Fredericton in August. The survey results revealed that this clearly was not the case. Seventy-five percent of the mentors who responded did not attend the workshop. Many of them explained that either they were not approached to be a mentor until after the workshop or their partner (BT) was not hired until later. It seems safe to speculate that since this was the first province-wide program, necessary information about it may have been slow in reaching the administrators most likely to select mentors for summer training.

Fifteen mentors in the survey who attended the August workshop provided some useful feedback on its value. They rated the listening skills and the trust building activities as being more practical than the role playing and the video case studies. All but three participants rated the planned activities as "very useful" or "satisfactory" and they recommended the continuation of provincial mentor training workshops. Here are a few representative comments made about the usefulness of the workshop with respect to preparing teachers for their mentoring role:

> *The first day seemed a little overwhelming, but by the end of the second, anxiety was lowered and most of the questions were answered.*

> *It helped identify my role and gave credibility to the program. I felt it was going to be a valuable experience.*
>
> *It gave me some idea of what activities to do and I felt more secure about what to expect.*
>
> *I understood that mentoring is not teaching or coaching, but rather someone who is a good listener and who can offer encouragement.*

Although not everyone liked the timing of the event, most felt the August pre-school opening was appropriate. They also felt that the two-day format was satisfactory. This comment may have captured the overall sentiment:

> *I found it difficult to start two days earlier, but it was definitely worth it.*

Many mentors who did not attend the workshop lamented their non-attendance and made a plea for some form of inservice training either at the provincial or the district level. One mentor requested that inservice be provided for mentors who started late; another urged the involvement of experienced mentors in future mentor training. Two mentors felt that once the provincial workshop was over, districts had a responsibility to offer opportunities for mentors to share ideas, discuss problems, and to evaluate their progress. Others suggested that mentor supervisors (DCP) and beginning teachers should attend the workshop as well.

The mentors were asked if they thought mentors who had attended the provincial Mentor Training Workshop should be given the option to attend workshops in successive years. Thirty-seven replied affirmatively; two said "no" and twenty did not respond. Given this option to attend, twenty-nine indicated they would attend, twenty-nine were unsure or did not reply; two said they would not attend.

If mentors were, for various reasons, unable to attend the provincial training session, one might wonder whether there was appropriate follow-up at the district level. The data implied that half of the twelve districts held formal district-wide sessions for mentors or for mentors and beginning teachers together. The quality of the sessions appeared to vary considerably among the districts which offered them. Mentors from the districts which did not provide inservice training complained that they did not know what was expected of them and that they lacked information about funding guidelines.

Perceived Problems with the Program

The mentoring teachers were asked to indicate which conditions caused problems for them and which of these proved to be significant. Table 2 provides an answer to that question.

Table 2

Conditions which caused problems or significant problems for mentors in the BTIP.

Which of these conditions caused problems for you as a mentor?	# Indicated Problem	# Indicated Significant Problem
lack of time	37	13
lack of common preparation time	24	4
unclear expectations for BTIP	17	4
location of BT's room to yours	16	3
different teaching assignment to BT	15	3
access to BTIP funds	10	1
different noon-time schedules	9	0
personal incompatibility with BT	3	1
different academic background to BT	2	0
age differences between you and BT	0	0

In a category under "other" problems, each of the following was listed once by the mentors:

- accessibility to resources
- BT travels between schools
- BT in part-time position - difficult to schedule time together

The mentor who listed the last item indicated that this posed a significant problem.

A brief analysis of Table 2 may be helpful. The conditions which illicited the two highest number of complaints are related to the issue of time. The report by Scott et al (1995) on the 1993-94 Pilot Project in New Brunswick also identified a lack of time as a major problem for pairs of teachers engaged in an induction program. Lack of common preparation time is a timetabling issue which was addressed in the principals' questionnaire. Most principals indicated that, if they knew about

the BTIP in advance, then they could schedule for the mentor and beginning teacher to have common preparation time.

The questionnaire asked the mentors to estimate their involvement in the BTIP in minutes per week. Many indicated that it was difficult to come up with a figure. One mentor suggested that she and her partner talked informally every day because their classrooms were adjacent; in addition, they held many long telephone conversations. Their situation reflected many others. Yet by using rather crude calculations, it would appear that mentors committed about one hour per week to this program.

Unclear expectations for the BTIP received the third highest number of complaints. That this was a significant issue is a reminder that many mentors neither attended the provincial workshop nor were given appropriate inservice in their own districts. If a brochure on the BTIP which the Steering Committee intended to publish and circulate had been completed, it might have helped fill this information vacuum.

Two other problems which the mentors in this study identified were the location of the BT's room relative to the mentor's and assigning mentors to BT's who have different teaching assignments. Both of these problems are well identified in the literature on teacher induction (Kilcher,1991; Wilkins, 1992) and in the previous study in this province by Scott et al (1995). While few situations are ever ideal, prior knowledge that such situations create problems for BTIP participants could alert administrators and help them to make the best possible choices given their circumstances.

The investigator wanted to know if age differences between the mentor and beginning teacher caused any problems. As we can see from the last item in Table 2; the answer was an unequivocal "no".

Another question asked if it mattered whether mentors were paired with someone of the same or opposite gender. Although most of the mentors (81%) were paired with a beginning teacher of the same sex, all but two of all respondents felt they were well matched with their partner. If they believed there was an incompatibility problem, it was not related to gender. The beginning teachers also reflected this sentiment in their survey results. It seems reasonable to conclude that pairing by gender is not an issue which administrators need to be concerned about, unless there are specific requests from the participants. What is currently happening naturally in the schools with respect to gender, seems to be quite successful.

Perceived Benefits of the Program

The survey attempted to learn what, if any, the mentors perceived to be the benefits of this program. The mentors articulately described many benefits for them, their partners, and for their schools in general. The strength of their feelings can perhaps be captured in Table 3.

Table 3

Mentors support for prepared statements concerning their perception of BTIP benefits

Benefit statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No reply
I enjoyed my new relationship with my BTIP partner.	40	15	1	0	6
Reflecting on my own teaching led me to new professional insights.	20	35	3	0	5
Although it was time consuming, I found the overall experience helped me develop professionally.	20	32	3	1	5
I was pleased by the opportunities and recognition associated with BTIP participation	17	24	7	4	8
Close association with my BTIP partner meant I gained new teaching ideas.	14	31	8	1	5

A large majority of mentors agreed with the benefit statements in Table 3. These statements include both professional and altruistic benefits for the mentors. It is interesting to note that experienced teachers feel that positive teaching experiences in both the cognitive and the affective domain are significant to them. Clearly, teachers value opportunities to grow professionally and to form meaningful personal relationships which have teaching as a central focus.

Several mentors commented on how the enthusiasm of their beginning teacher was an inspiration for them. One worded it this way: "(I) found the BT's enthusiasm contagious". Another said, " I bathed in her optimism". A third spoke of what she had learned from her partner and of the pleasure this role brought her:

> *I have learned a great deal from my co-teacher. She's young, enthusiastic, creative, gentle, nurturing. We have worked well together as a team and I truly enjoy being a mentor.*

A number of mentors felt that the opportunity to reflect on their own teaching had been a benefit to them:

> *[It] has made me re-visit my own planning/teaching techniques and examine reasons for my own successes and failures.*
>
> *Personally, it was a good reminder for me of things that I should be doing. Practise what I preach - good motto. Providing some help/assistance to newer teachers leaves one with a positive feeling.*
>
> *Being involved as a mentor made me more reflective about my teaching styles; [it] made me question why I was doing what I was doing.*

The mentors mentioned many specific benefits which they valued highly. A sample follows: visiting partners' classrooms, opportunities to discuss professional ideas in a non-supervised environment, seeing teaching centres in action, sharing teaching materials, teamwork, communication, learning new/more teaching strategies, lesson and unit planning , camaraderie and collegiality.

In addition to personal benefits, the mentors described their perception of the benefits of the program to their partners, the beginning teachers. A theme common to the mentors' comments suggested that the program contributed to increased confidence and to a faster learning curve for the new teachers. This quotation summed up many mentors' perceptions:

> *[My] partner seemed to feel insecure at the beginning of the year, especially with the age level and curriculum. I feel he is more confident and he has said he's learned many "tricks of the trade" that would have taken a longer period of time to develop - for many strategies, he did not have to go through the trial and error stage.*

Mentors felt that the BTIP had benefits for the school as well. In addition to the main benefit of helping a new teacher gain confidence, they mentioned that the mentoring program frees administrative staff from some supervisory responsibilities. When new teachers quickly and successfully adapt to the culture of their school and feel supported on a daily basis, everyone benefits, even if those benefits occur indirectly.

A glance at columns four and five of Table 3 act as a reminder that not every mentor's experience of the BTIP was a positive one. While these numbers are small, they are nevertheless significant. Mentors from one district lamented that the benefits listed in Table 3 were "all good possible goals, but few were reached because of lack of direction". A mentor in another district said:

> *It's been very difficult when schedules conflict. Our system seems more complex than I realized, especially with regard to administration - like being useful and helpful to a new staff.*

While many mentor-beginning teacher pairs experienced problems of one kind or another, for most, the overall experience of the BTIP was very positive. Evidence of this can be seen in Table 3 and in the fact that 56 mentors recommended the continuation of the BTIP; 3 did not reply to this question; only 2 recommended its cancellation.

The reasons for most of the negative experiences appear to be attributable to these three reasons:

1. Mentors or district contact people did not attend the August inservice training.

2. District contact people failed to provide information and ongoing support at the local level.

3. The mentor and beginning teacher were unable to develop a collegial relationship.

In districts where the district contact persons were knowledgeable about the program, true to its purpose, and provided appropriate support to M/BT teams, participants appear to have had few significant problems. When there was little or no district support, mentors and beginning teachers often felt frustrated and abandoned. Still, fifty-one mentors said they would be willing to act as mentors again. Five indicated they would not, but one of these gave retirement as her reason. Another claimed that a lack of sufficient time would cause her to refuse. Five did not reply to this question.

Recommendations for Improvement

Mentors were given an opportunity at the end of the questionnaire to make comments and suggestions for improvements to the program. Depending on the experience in their district, several themes emerged:

Recommendation 1:

> Ideally, the program should begin before schools open so mentors can help beginning teachers cope with this critical but confusing period.

This recommendation came from mentors in districts which were slow organizing for the BTIP. While this was not the provincial norm, teachers in these districts described situations in which they were being asked to begin acting as mentors as late as February:

> *Launching the program in February was not a good idea. It only leaves four months and a feeling of being rushed. Not to mention for the first part of the year, you are left wondering and speculating on the program.*
>
> *Our program did not get underway until just prior to Christmas. It would have been more effective if it started in late August. Group sessions within your own school could have some benefits.*

Recommendation 2:

> Provide clear guidelines for BTIP activities and funding.

This was a common complaint heard from mentors who had not attended the August workshop. When the district contact person failed to provide leadership, the problem was compounded, as these quotations imply:

> *There should have been a guide on what to do or what is expected of a mentor. At the beginning of the school year, the principal did not have a lot of information on this program, therefore making it difficult for me since I didn't know what my role would be.*
>
> *I am extremely disappointed that our district supervisor never once met with us or even suggested a district-wide meeting. All mentors in the district were very anxious to get together several times (with BT's as well), but no leadership was provided here.*

Recommendation 3:

> Provide opportunities at the district level for mentors to meet for discussion and an exchange of successful activities.

While this recommendation was strongly endorsed by mentors in districts where it did not happen, the data indicated that in about half of the districts, this need was well satisfied.

The Beginning Teachers

Seventy-six of the one hundred fifty-six beginning teachers in the BTIP responded to the survey (see Table 1) for a 49% return. All districts were represented except for District 16 (Miramichi) which had four beginning teachers. The majority of the beginning teachers (74%) were female; thirty-four

(45%) were assigned to elementary schools; twenty-three (30%) were assigned to junior high/middle schools; seventeen (22%) to high schools. Significant proportions of the beginning teachers were hired to teach at the kindergarten level (fifteen of thirty-four elementary teachers) or to teach French (eighteen French immersion and fifteen French Second Language teachers).

Thirty-six (47%) of the beginning teachers fell into the 21-26 age bracket; thirty-nine (51%) were 27-45 years of age, and one teacher was over 45. A glance at the age profile begs the question, "Were they all beginning teachers?" The answer depends on one's definition of a beginning teacher. The data indicated that twenty-four respondents were teaching for the first time, yet fifty-seven had never taught previously on a full-time basis. Seventeen of our 'beginning teachers' had taught on a full-time basis in other provinces or outside the public system. Simple calculations and a glance at their previous experience indicated that thirty-five of our beginning teachers had been supply teaching or had held temporary/short-term teaching contracts. One could argue that some of these teachers should not qualify as beginning teachers. However, it is significant that they were selected, generally by their principals, as candidates for this program.

Selection

Most of the beginning teachers reported that they were informed of their selection for the BTIP by their school administrators, although in 18 cases, the notice came from the district contact person (generally a district supervisor) or the district office. Mentors made the initial contact in two instances.

The situation in School District 2 (Moncton) differed from the rest of the province. This district was permitted to integrate the BTIP and its funding with the district's professional development program. Consequently, many beginning teachers in District 2 were never paired with a mentor and were unaware of any association with the BTIP. Several BT's in District 2 noted in their returned questionnaires that they had only read about their participation in the program in the NBTA News which was published near the end of the school year. This anomaly accounts for the differences between the numbers of mentors and beginning teachers in Table 1 and for the large number of 'no replies' to some questions.

As might be expected, the majority of beginning teachers reported that they were not involved in the selection of their mentor. However, nine BT's indicated that they were either directly involved in the selection process or they felt they were part of a negotiated process. Another eleven had an opportunity to agree to the choice of mentor or felt they could have asked for a change if they had disagreed with the choice. One BT lamented that it was December before she "finally got a teacher to agree to be [her] mentor".

Training and Professional Development Activities

The professional development activities associated with the BTIP can be thought of as occurring at three levels - provincially for mentors and DCP's (with leadership from the Steering Committee), district-wide for mentors and beginning teachers (with leadership from the DCP), and at the school level for beginning teachers (under the leadership of the mentors).

As was indicated in the previous section on mentor training, only one-quarter of the mentors who responded to the survey had attended the provincial workshop and only three-quarters (9/12) of the district contact people attended. This implies that a majority of the participants with leadership responsibilities in the BTIP did not attend the level one training session.

Beginning teachers in the BTIP were not given the opportunity to participate in the provincial Mentor Training Workshop held in August, 1995, in Fredericton. The Selection Committee expected that district contact people who attended this workshop would subsequently organize appropriate workshops for mentors and beginning teachers at the district level. Since the DCP's generally occupied supervisory positions, they should have been able to arrange for or provide inservice training within the district. Looking at the second level of inservice training, the data indicated that only six of the twelve participating districts organized district-wide activities for their mentors and/or beginning teachers. In view of the rather poor attendance at level one, level two became, for many mentors, their main opportunity to learn the expectations of the BTIP and to receive training. Districts 12 and 17 (which had acted as pilots for two years), were partial exceptions because some mentors had received previous training and were familiar with the expectations.

Here are some examples of the kinds of professional development activities which were reported at the district level:

- Orientation to the BT Induction Program
- Workshop on lesson planning
- Workshop on cooperative discipline
- Workshop on Hunter's motivational factors in teaching
- Skill training workshop for mentors only
- Personality assessment workshop

All of these sessions were led by district contact people. Most were conducted in the Fall using funds provided by the Department of Education and the NBTA. This paid for supply teachers who provided release time for the half or full-day sessions attended, in most cases, by both mentors and beginning teachers. Both groups gave high ratings to the value of these activities.

The same funding was available for use by BTIP participants at the school level. Most of expenditures and most of the professional activity occurred at this third level. Even if mentors and beginning teachers had not had access to provincial or district inservice training, as long as they were paired, they had some sense that they could and should initiate their own professional activities. In some districts, DCP's who had not been able to organize district-wide activities, intervened on an individual basis to provide ideas and encouragement.

The list of activities which follows is arranged in order of descending frequency. It consists of activities in which the beginning teachers participated, often but not always, with their mentors.

- Meetings with mentors to discuss educational issues
- Visits to others schools or classrooms for observation
- Attend inservice/workshops/PD sessions
- Individual preparation or unit planning
- Attend conferences not connected to the BTIP
- Observe videos in "Mentoring the New Teacher" series
- Meetings with a principal or DCP regarding the BTIP
- Visits to model class or UNB Resource Centre
- Discuss chapters in The Skillful Teacher
- Have dinner with mentor or grade level teachers
- Meet other beginning teachers and mentors
- Preparation for parent-teacher interviews

The first two activities on the list were most frequently reported by the beginning teachers; the others less often; those near the end of the list occurred rarely. BTIP funds were regularly used for these activities (dinner was an exception). It was significant that the BT's rated all of the activities which they or their mentor initiated as either very useful or satisfactory. None was seen as useless.

While the previous list was based on open-ended activities generated by the beginning teachers, Table 4, which follows, examines the commitment of time to specific professional activities which the literature suggests is appropriate for teacher induction programs. This table attempts to be more quantitative about the amount of time which the beginning teachers committed to various activities. Because the activities were pre-listed, the data indicated in comparative terms the extent to which beginning teachers engaged in particular professional activities.

Table 4

Table indicating the relative frequency with which beginning teachers participated in specific professional activities during the term of the BTIP.

		Frequency			
	Professional Activities	**0**	**1-5**	**6-10**	**>10**
1.	Make informal contacts with mentor at school	3	8	8	46
2.	Discuss teaching ideas or strategies	2	18	15	30
3.	Share or research teaching materials, books, etc	7	22	11	25
4.	Discuss curriculum or lesson planning	7	22	13	23
5.	Discuss student assessment or reporting	8	19	15	21
6.	Discuss classroom management techniques	4	23	17	19
7.	Discuss administrative policies or procedures	9	26	14	15
8.	Meet mentor socially out of school	21	31	6	7
9.	Meet mentor in scheduled (formal) setting	10	47	3	5
10.	Receive feedback about my teaching from mentor	17	32	10	4
11.	Mentor observes me teach	29	29	5	2
12.	Observe other colleagues teaching (not mentor)	26	29	3	5
13.	Observe my mentor teaching in his/her own class	32	25	0	7
14.	Team teach with Mentor	49	10	1	5
15.	Observe mentor demonstrate lesson in my classroom	51	4	1	5

Table 4 can be thought of as having two sections - an informal section comprising rows 1-8 and a formal section making up rows 9-15. By examining the figures in the last two columns, we can see that, with the exception of the last item in section one, beginning teachers frequently engaged in informal activities which involved discussing education issues or sharing resources. However, in section two, the highest figures are to be found in columns 2 and 3, because these activities were engaged in less frequently. These activities called for mentors and beginning teachers to engage in

emotionally risky professional activities such as observing one another teaching and in providing feedback (conferencing). Such activities require a higher level of professional preparation than those in section one. While it was evident that many pairs were not willing to risk the emotional demands associated with these activities, over 50 percent of the beginning teachers observed their mentors or other colleagues teaching on at least one occasion.

Row 11 is particularly interesting because it identifies the extent to which mentors observed the beginning teachers in their classrooms. Without classroom observation, the mentor will only know indirectly what is occurring in the BT's classroom. For principals charged with writing supervisory reports, classroom observation is absolutely essential. Yet the data indicates clearly that at least 38% of the BT's were never observed by their mentors. That figure could be considerably higher because many did not reply to this question. If the latter are removed from the calculations, the percentage climbs to forty-three. Yet, if one puts a positive spin on this statistic, approximately 60% of the mentors did observe their partners teaching.

The figures in rows 12 and 13 indicate that the BT's had limited opportunities to observe either other colleagues or their mentors teaching. Many teachers are obviously uncomfortable about being observed by fellow teachers. While this should not come as a surprise, it does create a handicap for beginning teachers who value classroom observation as a form of professional development. Evidence of this was the finding that the activities in rows 12 and 13 (observe other colleagues teaching and observe mentor teaching) were the top two choices for activities that the beginning teachers wished they could have engaged in more often. These two were followed by "receive feedback about my teaching" and "observe mentor demonstrate a lesson in my classroom".

Resource Use

The major resource available to the mentors and beginning teachers was $800 which could be used to purchase supply teacher time or professional materials. Most pairs opted to buy time to meet for discussion, attend meetings and workshops, or to observe one another teaching. Decisions were reached generally on a consensual basis, although sometimes a principal or DCP participated in the discussion. In a few cases, approval to spend the money was required from officials at the district or school board level. Participants complained that this requirement was frustrating for them as this extra bureaucracy slowed the decision-making process. Many teachers in District 2 (Moncton) reported that they were not aware of funding for the BTIP. Possibly because of the different arrangement used in that district, pairs did not have direct access to funds.

At the August workshop, mentors were informed of three resources which the Steering Committee felt would be useful for the program. The resources included a text called *The Skillful Teacher*, a handbook developed by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation for teacher induction programs - *Building for Success: Assisting Beginning Teachers*, and a video series called "Mentoring the New Teacher". The data indicated that very few pairs utilized these resources. Consequently one cannot

reach any conclusions about the relative value of these materials based on this survey.

Support for Beginning Teachers

The whole purpose of the BTIP was to provide on-site support for beginning teachers. It was the intention of the program that mentors be purposely selected for their interpersonal skills, their professional expertise, their commitment to the program, their sensitivity to the needs of their partner, and for their accessibility. As Table 5 shows, the beginning teachers rated their mentors quite highly on these five qualities. The category which received the lowest ranking was commitment to and interest in the BTIP. This is understandable when one recalls that three quarters of the mentors did not have the benefit of attending the August workshop.

Table 5

Ratings of mentors by the beginning teachers for their personal and professional qualities.

Qualities	Low	Average	High
Interpersonal skills	2	10	52
Professional expertise	1	4	59
Commitment to and interest in the BTIP	8	14	41
Sensitivity to needs of BT	3	11	50
Accessibility	3	11	50

Ninety-two per cent of the beginning teachers felt that they were well matched with their mentors and most believed they could end their relationship if either wished to do so. Only four individuals believed it would be awkward or impossible in their situation. One such case involved a beginning teacher who was paired with a principal. As this quotation illustrates, this situation created tension for the BT.

> *Yes, [I could end the relationship] but with difficulty for me, due to my mentor being my principal. The situation has improved somewhat, although I find my mentor relatively inaccessible due to the responsibility of [the] position.*

Another BT described an analogous situation in which he/she was paired with the principal's spouse. While the mentor was very competent, the BT found it awkward to talk about things which he/she did not think were fair.

Although one might naturally expect that mentors would prove to be the persons who were most helpful to the beginning teachers, this was not true in all cases. Table 6 reveals how the beginning teachers actually ranked their colleagues for their helpfulness.

Table 6

Number of times beginning teachers ranked colleagues as "most helpful".

	Ranking						
Colleagues	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**No Rank**
Mentor	32	11	8	1	3	0	19
Other experienced teacher	19	17	13	11	4	0	9
Principal	8	15	21	8	6	3	14
Vice-principal	4	14	10	10	5	2	30
Another BT	4	7	4	8	6	0	46
DCP	1	5	3	9	1	8	47
Department head	1	1	2	3	5	3	60

Certainly the figures were skewed by the input from those District 2 teachers who did not have mentors. They comprised most of the nineteen who did not rank mentors as being helpful at all. While not every beginning teacher who responded to this survey had a mentor, every one of them had other experienced colleagues and a principal. When they found themselves in a dysfunctional situation with their mentor, or when a mentor was not selected for them, these other colleagues evidently filled in the gap.

In three cases, principals acted as mentors for beginning teachers. One was ranked as being most helpful; the others were ranked as second (behind a department head) and third most helpful (behind a vice-principal and a DCP). Comments from the BT's suggest that generally, where the situation permits, they would prefer to have teachers rather than principals acting as mentors.

Twelve of the BT's who had mentors, ranked them lower than first or second. A glance at their profiles suggests there were common characteristics which developed in these cases. In the most common cases, their mentors showed little commitment to the program and made infrequent contact with the beginning teachers. A few cases involved personal incompatibility between the mentors and beginning teachers. These incompatibilities were caused by different academic backgrounds, language difficulties, or different teaching philosophies.

Table 6 suggests that, while mentors were consistently the most helpful to the beginning teachers, principals and other experienced teachers made significant contributions. The extent to which some district contact people got involved was also a bit of a surprise. Nine BT's rated them as first, second or third. Clearly these individuals fulfilled more than their role as an administrator or facilitator of the BTIP.

The beginning teachers indicated that the help they received from their first choice in Table 6 took many forms:

- Discussion and sharing ideas
- Encouragement
- Friendship
- Shared resources
- Coaching professional skills
- Develop self-evaluation skills
- Orientation to school
- Advice

From this list, twenty-six claimed they valued discussion and sharing ideas most highly; twelve valued encouragement highest, followed by friendship with eight, and shared resources with four votes.

Perceived Problems for Beginning Teachers

In order to learn what conditions caused problems, the beginning teachers were asked to indicate which items on a list of anticipated problems posed difficulties for them during the course of the BTIP. Table 7 shows the number of response to each of the conditions listed.

Table 7

Conditions which caused problems for beginning teachers in the BTIP

Condition Causing Problems	Number of Responses
Lack of time	42
Unclear expectations of the BTIP	21
Different teaching assignment from mentor	19
Location of mentor's room relative to yours	12
Different academic background than mentor	6
Choice of mentor	4
Age differences with mentor	2
Other	7

Among the problems cited in the other category were:

- mentor was not in my school
- being an itinerant teacher, it was difficult to put time and effort needed to really work at reaching my goals with a particular group
- no clear guidelines set up; it was difficult to decide what we'd do together
- money reimbursement takes time, which sometimes creates awkward situations
- different points of view and experience
- lack of materials within district (i.e. The Skillful Teacher)
- mentor was also department head (too busy)

In an open-ended question, the beginning teachers were asked to identify what they saw as the negative features of the BTIP. Seven respondents indicated that they could not identify any; one BT wrote that "all was positive; felt like the district cared".

However, these positive feelings were not reflected in the comments of the others who responded. Their comments served to emphasize that the most frequently selected conditions in Table 7 really did cause difficulties for many of the participants. In particular, the beginning teachers complained about the lack of time, the late start of the program in some districts, and the lack of clear guidelines for the BTIP, both for activities and for funding. One BT made an atypical comment to suggest that in their program there had been " a waste of some money - doing activities just for the sake of using the funds".

Perceived Benefits of the Program for Beginning Teachers

Although they identified problems with the BTIP, the beginning teachers described far more positive features than negative ones. Their comments strongly emphasized how much they appreciated knowing that there was a designated person in their building who was readily available on a daily basis to help them in a variety of ways. These quotations provide a flavour of this sentiment:

> *My mentor answered all of my questions patiently, no matter how trivial and this made my year so much easier.*
>
> *Someone I could talk to about teaching concerns, without feeing like I was bothering them, because the help was part of the program.*
>
> *[It was] very supportive to know that a lot of people are concerned about first year teachers. [It] gave me lots of shortcuts and, therefore, I was able to concentrate on my teaching.*
>
> *[The BTIP] encourages us to set goals which we might not do otherwise. [It] gives us a chance to observe others teach and to encourage us to improve and discuss new ideas with our mentor.*

The beginning teachers' level of agreement to the five prepared statements in Table 8 is clear evidence that, despite problems, they saw the overall BTIP in a positive light.

Table 8

Level of agreement of beginning teachers with prepared statements concerning the BTIP

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Overall the BTIP has been beneficial to me	34	21	5	0
I recommend the BTIP be continued	46	13	1	0
One year is long enough to be involved in the BTIP	15	25	13	9
I made the right choice by entering the teaching profession	45	13	1	0
Apart from my mentor, I feel I have been supported by my school colleagues	40	19	1	1

In addition to showing strong support for the BTIP, Table 8 reflects the positive feelings which the BT's have about their choice of profession and about their colleagues who are not directly involved in the program. It is interesting, also, to obtain their perception of whether or not the program should be extended beyond one year. There is not a clear consensus on that issue, but there is stronger support for a one-year program.

Recommendations for Improving the BTIP

Like the mentors, the beginning teachers were encouraged to make suggestions for improvements to the BTIP. Their recommendations follow:

1. Make information about the program available to all schools. Address such topics as expectations, resources, funding, and suggested activities for mentors and beginning teachers.

2. Insure that mentors and partners are paired at the beginning of the school year.

3. Try to match mentors and beginning teachers by subject (high school), team (middle school), or grade level (elementary).

4. Since mentors should have teaching responsibilities similar to the beginning teacher, avoid choosing administrators as mentors.

5. Evaluate the BTIP at the district level at the end of each year.

6. Establish an electronic mail discussion group for BTIP participants.

The Principals

A total of fifty-two principals responded to the questionnaire. Table 1, in the introduction, shows the actual breakdown by district. No replies were received from principals in districts 2, 6, and 14. Since the number of beginning teachers in districts 6 and 14 was relatively small, this was not surprising. However, District 2 had a large number of beginning teachers spread over nineteen schools and, yet not a single principal returned a survey form. As previously indicated, many District 2 beginning teachers were never given mentors and did not identify with the BTI Program due to a special arrangement with the Department of Education. Given this situation, it is quite possible that the principals either concluded or were told that there was no need to reply. If the District 2 principals are counted in the total, then the survey return was 54%. If they are omitted, then the return climbs to 70%.

Eighteen elementary principals responded; nine administered schools with kindergarten to junior high school grades; fifteen were principals of middle/junior high schools; two schools contained all grades; four contained grades 7 - 12; four were high schools.

None of the principals admitted to not being aware of the BTIP, although two did not reply to this question. Eighty-five per cent mentioned that the program had been promoted at district principals' meetings, either by a district supervisor (often the DCP), the superintendent, or the assistant superintendent. Others reported being contacted directly by an official in their district office.

Four principals indicated that the goals of the program were not clear to them; another four did not reply, suggesting that about 15% of the principals fell into this uninformed category. A higher percentage (21%) said they did not receive their information early enough. Although there was not a consensus on when it should arrive, all agreed they needed the information before school began in September; before school closed in June would be even better.

Selection Process

The principals were asked to describe the process they used to select mentors for the BTIP. Overall, the data indicated that principals were directly involved in selecting mentors in almost all cases. A significant proportion called for volunteers from among their staff or turned to coordinators, department heads, or school teams for their recommendations. Some principals reported that they consulted with the beginning teachers before making a final selection; one even received a

recommendation from the district contact person. In spite of these considerations, some principals reported that circumstances such as the size of the school or the number of teachers at a grade level often restricted their possibilities.

Principals indicated that the main criteria they used for the selection of mentors were personality, willingness to participate, and grade level or subject taught.

Support for the BTIP From Outside the School

Many principals gave examples of ways the BTIP had been supported both provincially and at the district level. They frequently named their district contact person as a resource person to whom they could turn for information. Most were aware of provincial funding for the program, yet, one principal claimed that he had only heard in March that funding was available for supply teachers to provide time for BTIP participants.

In contrast to the majority, four principals indicated that they perceived there was no support for the BTIP, and another eight did not respond to this question. This implies that there was a breakdown in communication with these individuals. Since some of them were in districts where other principals described well-supported programs, one might conclude they had missed information available to their colleagues. However, it was evident from the comments of the principals, that some districts were better informed and supported than others. These brief quotations from principals in six different districts will serve to illustrate the various degrees of perceived support:

> *[We had] district meetings, readings/books, videos, and money to travel and view how other schools were run.*
>
> *None, other than that enlisted by mentor or BT.*
>
> *[We had] supply teacher days available; meetings for participants and print materials made available.*
>
> *[There was] little time to seek outside support as program began so late in the fall.*
>
> *None.*
>
> *[There was] good support re materials and resources from the district and province.*

The Principals' Involvement in the BTIP

The principals were asked to describe the extent to which they had been personally involved in their school's program. Apart from their fairly consistent involvement in the selection process, it appeared that about two-thirds of the principals became actively involved in the BTIP while one third had limited involvement.

One principal from the actively-involved group served on the Steering Committee, provided inservice, monitored the school program, and served on a school team which consisted of the principal, mentor, and beginning teacher. Many principals spoke of holding regular meetings to keep in touch with the pairs' discussions and plans; they also reported providing encouragement on a regular basis. A principal who had participated in the pilot project the previous year "arranged supply days and financial assistance, encouraged and checked in on the BT and M". Another principal said that he/she "found it necessary to be involved to keep pairs active". Three principals served as mentors.

The second, less-involved, group indicated that beyond the selection process, they left the mentors and beginning teachers mainly on their own. Some reported that they had delegated this responsibility to others.

Principals in the 1993-95 pilot projects had indicated that having mentors relieved them of some responsibility for closely monitoring the progress of beginning teachers (Scott et al 1995). Consequently, the survey asked principals whether they believed teachers who were part of the BTIP should be formally supervised. It was clear from the responses that all but a few principals felt strongly that formal supervision was necessary. Here is how several principals expressed this viewpoint:

> *A mentor is great, but I am the principal and ultimately responsible for all the staff and effective curriculum delivery.*
>
> *Certainly do! Foundation years are very important (clinical supervision). Mentors are able to prepare beginning teachers for the formative supervision.*
>
> *Yes, because it involves the principal with the BT in the area of instructional leadership - it offers support and provides visibility and on-going dialogue for both parties.*

The Steering Committee hoped that, whenever possible, mentors and beginning teachers would be given timetables which permitted some common lunch hours and preparation periods. Nearly half of the respondents claimed that they had been able to accommodate this need. Of the remainder,

many pointed out that it was impossible to adjust the timetable because information about the program arrived too late.

Program Evaluation

To determine their perspective on the impact of the BTIP on their schools, the principals were asked to rate the degree to which they felt the program had been successful. Table 9 reports the findings to that question.

Table 9

Principals' Ratings of BTIP Success in Their Schools

Ratings	Responses
Program was very successful	19
Program was moderately successful	19
Program was moderately unsuccessful	6
Program was very unsuccessful	2
No reply	6

Table 9 indicates that most principals (73%) judged the program as successful to some extent. Some of their accompanying comments provide insights into what they valued in the program:

> *It allows time for the beginning teacher and mentor to share ideas, time for the mentor to coach and encourage in a different way - not in a supervisory level.*
>
> *[It] helped the teacher adjust to her new placement and made the transition much easier.*
>
> *Staff have been very positive in their comments.*

Other comments from principals who judged the program both successful and unsuccessful, point to deficiencies and suggest improvements.

> *Within the school, this has worked well. However, if we had the program goals/materials earlier, we could have had earlier visitations.*
>
> *[We] weren't sure how much we could do at first and we missed a few opportunities.*
>
> *There was no district support and no info for so long, I gave up chasing it.*
>
> *[I] don't believe the program was properly implemented to have an effect. The mentor needs time scheduled away from class on a regular basis to help the beginning teacher.*
>
> *Class location could have been better; earlier meetings in the year could have gotten the process off the ground sooner.*
>
> *[The] process will be more effective if there are specific briefing sessions throughout the year among all the participants (BT,M,P,DCP).*

One principal, who rated their school program as very unsuccessful, felt that their experience had been unique since they had experienced previous success with the pilot project. Another, who also gave their program a very unsuccessful rating, said simply that, "the mentor is the key". This seemed to imply that an unfortunate mentor selection had been mainly responsible for their lack of success.

A very significant measure of the value which principals placed on the BTIP was their willingness to be involved in the future and in their recommendations for the continuation of the program. Forty-five of fifty-two principals (86%) indicated that they would want to be involved in the future. Six did not reply; only one wanted no future involvement. Similarly, 90% recommended the continuation of the program. No one called for its cancellation; however, five principals did not reply to this question.

The principals' survey also gathered data on administrators' perceptions of the impact of the BTIP on the beginning teachers, the mentors, other teachers, students, and on themselves. The following descriptions of the impact on each group rely heavily on representative quotations from the principals.

Impact on Beginning Teachers

The proportion of positive and negative comments on the impact of the BTIP on beginning teachers was approximately equal to the distribution of successful and unsuccessful program ratings in Table 9 (i.e. most were positive).

> *[The BTIP was] beneficial - provided a time to gain confidence and reassurance in teaching and the way to handle situations involving student discipline and parents.*
>
> *Positive impact; eliminated unnecessary stress; enhanced BT's professional growth; provided security; enhanced teacher rapport with students; BT became better instructionally prepared.*
>
> *Reasonably beneficial, considering the circumstances (especially visits to other kindergartens) not convinced that BT's have used their mentors to the extent they should.*
>
> *Helped BT fit into the job role; gave her a sense of security - someone to ask.*

Impact on Mentors

Principals made 33 positive, 6 negative, and 4 non-committal comments about the impact of the program on mentors. Nine did not respond to this question.

> *Enhanced self-esteem; sense of pride on BT's improvement; became more conscientious; planned more carefully; modelled good lessons.*
>
> *A positive and reaffirming experience with respect to their own professional growth and knowledge.*
>
> *Not a good experience for the mentor.*
>
> *Encouraged to reflect on their practices because they were role models; excellent review of required skills; encouraged consultation; heightened self- esteem and use of materials, etc.*
>
> *Slight [impact] - always helped anyway; this simply formalized the normal happenings.*

Sense of empowerment and a show of confidence in them on the part of administration.

Impact on Other Teachers

Many principals did not respond to this question. This observation and these representative quotations seemed to imply that there was a limited impact on other teachers who were not directly involved in the BTIP.

Minimal impact, although there are other teachers who served as mentors in the past and talk to the current BTIP members about their experiences.

Envious of collegiality; it also encouraged more sharing - everyone on staff was very helpful and supportive of our new members.

Have benefitted by recognizing that colleagues can assist one another in a meaningful way.

[They] questioned the amount of money being spent on the program i.e. supply teachers.

Effects are isolated to the team.

Very little - some positives in terms of opening up to new staff.

Impact on Students

As might be expected, the principals found it difficult to identify direct benefits of the BTIP on students. Many did not reply to the question. As the following comments reflect, they assumed there was an indirect impact on students.

Not directly measured, but believe that if the beginning teacher gains from the mentor, then students will directly benefit as well.

Reduced the instructional dip experienced when new teachers are being introduced to the job.

Beginning teachers adjusts quicker to their students' needs in a more comfortable way with greater confidence. Students then see teachers with knowledge and a greater confidence.

Very little impact.

Indirect positive impact, because BT was not isolated but had someone to share with (difficulties and successes) and more confidence in lesson deliveries.

Benefit directly as rookie teacher is developing quickly into a seasoned teacher.

Impact on Principals

In reflecting on the impact of the BTIP on themselves, six principals made negative remarks, thirty-nine were positive, and seven did not reply. Overall, they felt it reduced their workload by deflecting questions from them to the mentors.

Reduction in workload when sharing admin responsibilities with another capable person.

Has not been good this year as I experienced in the past.

Glad for program. As a new principal, I may not have had the time to answer the beginning teacher's questions.

Great to know someone in regular contact with the beginning teacher to provide support - a proactive measure.

Have not had to keep as close a track on this BT because I know the mentor is right there to help. My experience over the last 3 years is that they have all gone well. I credit this to the mentors, not to me.

Enhanced my belief in the concept of coaching; emphasized the importance of collegiality.

Comments and Suggestions for Improvements

The principals strongly endorsed the concept of the BTIP, but they also pointed out many flaws in its implementation. Many of their comments led the investigator to conclude that the BTIP concept, as envisioned by the Steering Committee, is basically sound; however, it needs to be communicated more effectively and implemented with more fidelity in all districts. The following quotations from the principals represent a variety of perspectives on how the program should be improved. The first two remarks reinforced a concern raised by the mentors and beginning teachers:

> *There has to be a plan. That is not too much to ask for. We need to know what is going on with money supports. Without that, we know nothing and plan nothing.*
>
> *[Provide a] clearer set of expectations and regulations in print; a how-to manual could be useful.*

Several principals commented on the need for an earlier start to the program, a theme heard from other participants:

> *Start the program earlier in the year. Get info to principals and teachers about goals of the program by August.*
>
> *Ensure all schools have the materials prior to the start of the program; [provide] opportunity for all to be involved in the necessary inservice or program presentations.*
>
> *[A] beginning meeting before would have been advantageous. Participants heard much too late and had other vacation plans that could not be changed. Time together, spread over the year is needed.*

Several principals pointed to a need for participants to obtain training and have opportunities for discussion. Evidently participants from these districts had not attended the provincial workshop and efforts at the district level were unsatisfactory.

> *I would suggest a regional orientation for new teachers - see it as a networking affair. It would be perfect for mentors and beginning teachers to attend together.*
>
> *Info meetings should take place in early fall, not the spring - release time could be made available for visitation.*
>
> *Further training for mentors; a collective meeting to start the year with all district mentors and BT's - invite principals as well (maybe there was one).*

Three principals had perceptive observations about which qualities to consider when selecting mentors.

> *Mentor selected must have leadership qualities and be able to show initiative with the program. A laissez-faire attitude toward this type of program is a hindrance.*
>
> *[The BTIP has] terrific potential if all concerned are keen and convinced it's a worthy program. Proper preparation and planning of long range goals are the key components - only effective if participants are enthusiastic and excited; never if it's pushed on them. Could be a golden opportunity.*
>
> *This required a lot of work on behalf of the mentor, much more than can be appreciated. Our BT spent 20 minutes per day watching the mentor teach and they talked daily. [I] appreciated the commitment of this teacher.*

Finally, these two quotations represent thoughtful suggestions which, although not common, appeared worthy of reporting.

> *Suggestion: for greater impact, I believe BT's should be involved in a 2-year program. I especially believe a percentage of the teachers should be involved more than one year. A change of mentors would enhance a BT's growth. There definitely has to be a supervisor/monitor at the district level to facilitate this program.*
>
> *I would like to see the program available ON REQUEST ONLY. Principals who see the need for an individual teacher could request the monies for the program.*

The District Contact People

Each of the twelve anglophone school districts appointed one so-called District Contact Person (DCP) to facilitate and coordinate the Beginning Teachers Induction Program at the district level. Eight of the twelve indicated that they also occupied positions as district supervisors. Two of them were French supervisors because there was a large number of beginning French teachers in their districts. One DCP occupied a position as an Assistant-superintendent, another as a director of administration. Generally, they were asked to accept this extra responsibility by their superintendents.

Although one was a member of the Steering Committee, most of the district contact people indicated that they learned about the BTIP in the Spring or Summer of 1995. Only three of the DCP's did not

attend the August workshop for mentor training, and of these, two had prior involvement with the pilot project in their district. All indicated that the goals of the program were clear to them.

Roles Played by the District Contact People

All but two of the DCP's indicated that they visited schools and made direct contact with mentors and beginning teachers. One exception was the DCP from District 2 which had a different relationship with the BTIP. His approach was to offer assistance to beginning teachers through the District 2 Staff Growth Model. The other DCP, who was in a district which had previously participated in the pilot program, only informed principals of the continuation of the program and asked them to select mentors.

All of the district contacts described how they interpreted their roles as a DCP. Their involvement ranged from minimal to extensive. A DCP with pilot experience described his role as consisting of "communicating goals and expectations of the program; monitoring progress of the teams, and holding them accountable." Another DCP wrote:

> *I played a variety of roles: clerical/resource person (as in what could/couldn't be funded, what account to bill, expense sheets, funds remaining ...), mentor (in some cases I was consulted a lot), workshop organizer, public relations person ....*

One of the more involved supervisors described her role this way:

> *Initially I coordinated the matching process within schools and held an afternoon/evening session for the pairs and administrators. I've organized two other sessions for BT's (personality and cooperative discipline), encouraged the use of funds for observation and communication, and purchased PD materials, etc..*

Eight of the district contact people believed that someone was definitely needed to perform the kind of coordinating responsibilities described above. The responses from both the beginning teachers' and the mentors' surveys also supported the concept of a district contact person. When asked if they felt they were the logical choice for DCP in their district, six replied in the affirmative, two in the negative; 4 were unsure. Perhaps the latter group was being modest. One DCP expressed her belief that an experienced mentor would be preferable to a district supervisor.

Problems Encountered

The only difficulty which was mentioned more than once was the lack of time available to perform the DCP role. The other problems deserve listing since they both support and augment the problems

reported by mentors and BT's:

- teams were late entering the program
- wrong choice of mentor
- new teachers wanting funds for instructional materials for their classrooms
- suspicion and cynicism from those who believe that we need to follow a specific road map
- unsure of what the NBTA required to access their portion of the funds

Perceptions of the BTIP Impact

Because they visited various school, it was hoped that the district representatives would develop a sense of the overall impact of the BTIP on various groups in their district. One DCP felt her involvement was too minimal to comment, but the remaining eleven made many very positive comments about the impact they perceived, first, on beginning teachers:

> *[The BTIP provided a] greater sense of security and self confidence; increased knowledge of teaching strategies; increased collaboration.*
>
> *[The BT] felt support through this program - they were not left alone and maintained a degree of comfort in knowing that someone was there to listen, advise, and support.*
>
> *[It had a] strong impact; long overdue; vital and necessary.*
>
> *[It] provided valuable support to new teachers; provided an important source of emotional support as well as access to many valuable resources which might have been overlooked.*

Most of the DCP's also spoke of the impact which they perceived the BTIP had on mentors. They seemed to believe that mentoring was a "good opportunity to share expertise and wisdom" and a " benefit for all concerned". Another wrote of "increased collaboration and job satisfaction; improved self-image; further knowledge of effective teaching strategies". These benefits tend to parallel those mentioned by the mentors and principals.

Understandably, the district contacts were less aware of how the BTIP affected teachers not directly involved in the program. However, these quotations reveal insights which hint at potential professional growth opportunities for colleagues of BTIP participants.

> *The plan places responsibility with the teacher and, to date, teachers have reacted positively. Reaction has, for the most part, been cautious optimism.*
>
> *[It has created] a more professional attitude towards the job of teacher; perhaps some regret that they haven't been selected as mentor.*
>
> *[It has] increased awareness of the importance of induction and effectiveness of collaboration.*

Could the district representatives detect any impact of the BTIP on students? Many did not respond to this question, but the responses of several provide interesting insights:

> *Students benefitted in the 5 situations where the beginning teachers were successful - numerous difficulties with students in the unsuccessful situation.*
>
> *In a small way, students may see a more collegial, collaborative relationship between the staff and new teachers. Overall, students would be benefitting from the enhanced classroom practice of a new teacher.*
>
> *[I saw] benefits resulting from improved classroom management and use of effective teaching strategies.*

Perhaps because they work closely with principals, the DCP's seemed to have stronger sense of the BTIP's impact on principals. Their comments reflected two themes: principals are increasingly enthusiastic about it because the program supports what they have traditionally wanted, but lacked time, to do; and secondly, the model of required collaboration between mentors and beginning teachers has had a noticeably positive impact on some school staffs. Perhaps, as this single comment implies, some principals still lack awareness of the program's potential benefits:

> *Maybe principals should be at beginning workshops for mentors and beginning teachers to be aware of what their role is and to be aware of the goals of the mentorship program.*

Nine of the twelve district contacts reflected on the impact the BTIP had on them. Several spoke of their increased awareness of the necessity of induction. Others referred to the enjoyment they felt from their direct contacts with the mentors and beginning teachers. This quotation supports that sentiment:

> *I found the program one of the few 'moving forward' initiatives that we enjoy. It's refreshing to see enthusiasm and appreciation from teachers for the support this program gives them.*

The reflections of the District 2 contact person, on the other hand, suggest that it was difficult to evaluate the impact of the BTIP in that district:

> *[I] have found that with the efforts to 'defend' our approach, it has been difficult to maintain our focus. This along with the considerable pressures of reorganization of districts does not permit a fair reflection at this point.*

Those DCP's who seemed to be actively engaged in the program saw their BTIP responsibilities as a valuable addition to their already crowded agendas. Their comments reflected the satisfaction they felt in the commitment of the participants and with the variety of activities initiated by the teams.

From the perception of the district contact people, how successful was the BTIP in each of the districts? Four DCP's rated their district's program as very successful; seven thought theirs was moderately successful; one rated theirs somewhere between moderately unsuccessful and very unsuccessful.

Probably the strongest endorsement of the program which the DCP's could give was their recommendation that the program be continued. All but one person (who did not complete the last page of the survey) recommended continuation. Comments such as "very much so" and "most definitely" were added to the survey forms by several respondents.

Recommendations for Improvements

The district contact people made relatively few recommendations for improvements in the BTIP. Several respondents indicated that a different person should be selected as DCP in their district. That lead to this recommendation:

1. Superintendents should discuss the possible re-appointment of a district contact person with the incumbent to determine whether he/she is willing to commit the time and energy to the assignment.

The second recommendation is based on the suggestion of one DCP, but it echoes a theme heard from all the participants.

2. The Department of Education should print a handbook which explains all aspects of the BTI Program. Copies should be distributed to all participants and made available to other interested parties.

The final recommendation is implicit in the comments of three of the district contact people who were concerned about the lack of opportunities for mentors and beginning teachers to meet for inservice training or discussion at the district level.

3. It should be made clear to district contact people that they have a responsibility to insure that all BTIP participants in their district receive appropriate inservice training. When this does not occur at the provincial level, then they must provide it locally. In addition, there is a clearly identified need for mentors and beginning teachers to meet to discuss common concerns. It should be the responsibility of the DCP's to convene these meetings.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the results of this survey, the investigator concluded that in spite of the fact that the BTIP was hastily implemented and professional training was not available to all mentors, the goals of the program were generally achieved. Furthermore, it appears that the induction program, as envisioned by the Provincial Steering Committee, is basically sound. Details of the program need to be communicated more effectively and implemented with more fidelity in all districts. If one considers that this was the first year of a very ambitious program, the degree to which the BTIP achieved its goals is quite remarkable. The BTIP appears to hold considerable promise not only for the successful induction of new teachers but also for encouraging collegial norms of professional development within the teaching profession.

It is hoped that the following general recommendations will provide useful insights and direction to policy-makers, administrators, and future participants in the Beginning Teacher Induction Program. In addition, readers are encouraged to review specific recommendations from the mentors, beginning teachers, principals, and district contact people.

Recommendation #1: The Department of Education should continue to support the BTIP in districts which agree to follow the basic guidelines outlined by the Provincial Steering Committee.

Recommendation #2: The Provincial Steering Committee should develop a BTIP information brochure and distribute it to all interested parties. This brochure should articulate the goals and benefits of the program, list considerations for mentor selection, explain the funding arrangements, and provide suggestions for appropriate activities for mentors and beginning teachers. If this project

was found to be too ambitious for one brochure, then consideration should be given to producing one brochure for administrators and another for participants.

Recommendation #3: The Department of Education should continue to appoint an individual to serve as the provincial coordinator and to insist that district superintendents select committed individuals to serve as district representatives to coordinate and facilitate the program at the district level.

Recommendation #4: The Department of Education should continue to offer provincial mentor training workshops for new mentors and district representatives as early as practical in the school year.

Recommendation #5: The current level of funding seems adequate. However, consideration should be given to providing BTIP funding only to districts which clearly identify mentor-beginning teacher pairs, provide trained leadership, indicate their intention to provide support for participants at the district level, and initiate their program in the Fall.

Recommendation #6: Establish a homepage or similar electronic bulletin board arrangement for BTIP participants and facilitators so they can easily share information and communicate with one another using the internet.

Recommendation #7: Whenever possible, experienced teachers, rather than administrators, should be selected to serve as mentors.

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